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**Transcript of DARE Interview (1969): Yuma, Arizona; Primary Informant AZ014
(Tape 0081-S1)**

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INTRODUCTION: The following was recorded from Dictionary of American Regional English, tape zero zero eight one, side one.

5 FIELDWORKER: This is fieldworker [beep], recording Mr. Joseph [beep] in Yuma, Arizona. Uh, Mr. [beep], you were gonna tell me about the uh, the shop here, uh, the sort of things you deal in, and the kind of people that come in and so forth.

10 INFORMANT: [throat clear] Well [beep], or Mr. [beep], my shop was not a planned thing. Eh, it, it's far from the original planning, today as you see it, it's, it's an object that more or less grew from a desire to please a broader scope of customer. [Cough] Now you drive through the Southwest and you run into a great deal of what's called trading posts. And perhaps we fit into that category to a small degree, because we have such things as Indian jewelry, and, uh, that are authentically made by the Indians. Tribes such as the Navajo, the Hopi and the Zuni. We also carry things like Navajo rugs and so on that are handmade, Chimayo robes.

FIELDWORKER: What, what are Chimayo robes?

15 INFORMANT: [cough] Well, it's a robe, made by the Chimayo Indians, who are a small tribe up between, uh Albuquerque and Gallup. No, they're between Albuquerque and Santa Fe, beg your pardon. But they put out a very distinctively designed robe, and it's thin, it's a, it's a soft weave, it isn't as hard and stiff as the Navajo blanket or rug is looked upon. It's not, also, quite as handmade. The Navajo object is entirely handmade [phone rings] whereas the Chimayo has a tendency to, uh, uh, do his work on a, on a hand loom. The Navajo's loom [background noise]
20 is a very crude things.

FIELDWORKER: Thanks.

INFORMANT: The Navajo, he makes his rug right—or she, because it's the women that do the weaving—they make their rug right from the sheep. They raise their own sheep, sheer them, card it, spin it, dye it, and think up their own designs and go from there.

25 FIELDWORKER: Could you tell me something about the dyes? I saw on the wall in the shop an elaborate, uh, picture of where the different dyes come from {that seemed intriguing.

INFORMANT: Well,} yes, uh, the, o-original Navajo weaving was done by native dyes, or native herbs, or, as is referred to in the book *Vegetal* and that's spelled V-E-G-E-T-A-L, vegetal dyes, uh, this is almost a lost art, though, most of them have gone to commercial dye, because today
30 commercial dye is very, very good, and it's easy to handle, and the old vegetal dyes, many of them would fade and run and so on. But, uh, there is still a few who stick to the old style vegetal dye, and that chart you saw on the wall is, is showing you where some of these things come from. For instance, uh, one of the very sort of chartreuse greens, comes from the red skin of an onion. And, uh, it makes an excellent dye. But now getting back to the store, what, is what
35 we began to talk about, uh, I have objects like glassware, which are hand-blown things down in Guadalajara, Mexico, I've got, uh, beautifully painted artwork done by, and pottery, done by the Tonalá Indians of Mexico. But I do try to stick to native hand crafts that come from, generally speaking, in and around this area, now that's the, that's the should we say gift shop end of my business. Now then, what began as a hobby, eh, in the lapidary [phone rings] game,
40 uh, has also grown into a business, which I call as my lapidary supply house, or if you want to, you could even call it rock shop, which I've combined with the trading post, or gift shop end of the business. And the rock end of it is actually about to outgrow the other. Uh, I've got as good or better, a lapidary supply house than you'll find anywhere outside the greater Los Angeles area, in this vicinity. Now, a lot of people don't understand what a lapidary supply house is. A
45 lapidarist is one who cuts and polishes a rock. Now, a lapidary supply house caters to that fellow who cuts and polishes the rock. That means you're selling machinery, and the supply that goes with this machinery for cutting and polishing rocks. Now whether it would be a flat surface like a bookend, whether it be a smooth-topped cabochon surface, or whether it be a faceted stone, such as you have in amethyst, diamonds and so on. Well, we're the supply house for
50 that, for this general area. My general area that I refer to is perhaps a hundred and twenty-five miles around me. [cough] Now, uh, we are also something else that doesn't really show when you walk into the store, because the other gentleman who's in the store with me, we both are silversmiths and goldsmiths. Now this is a self-taught profession, because there isn't any such thing as a school to teach you how to do silversmithing and goldsmithing. And we advertise in
55 the trade journals for silversmithing and goldsmithing, and, uh, this comes to us from all over the country and it has grown to be a considerable facet of the business, also. In fact, the Yuma area is very seasonal, we are a winter place, and we fill up here in the winter with winter tourists who come out of the North Country to the mild and virtually frost free climate of this area to spend the winters, and this is especially true of old people, and they can get out here in
60 the hills and hot rocks, so you can see how it dovetails in. But anyway, uh, this type of thing we are catering to, uh, just constantly, but the, the silversmithing deal is what keeps us alive in our off-season. That's the point I was attempting to make there. During the hot weather, uh, the, the tourists are all in the North Country, Montana and Wyoming and Idaho and places such as that, and we get business from that country mailed down to us. So you can see, it's this type of

65 an operation that makes us a continuing business on a twelve months basis, and, uh, as the business originally started out, we made money perhaps four months out of the year, that would be December, January, February, March, but it's now gotten to the place where I don't think we actually lose money any month out of the year. I think we make something on a twelve month basis.

70 FIELDWORKER: Wh-what does, what does a silversmith or goldsmith do?

INFORMANT: Well, you have found yourself a pretty rock. You've got equipment that you can cut this rock with, and polish it, you've ended up with a stone that to you is quite pretty, you like it. You want it made into a piece of jewelry. But it's an oddball shape or size, it, it doesn't fit anything that you could walk into some jewelry store and say, "Have you got a mounting that
75 this would fit in to?" It just doesn't. So it has to be a handmade mounting. Now that's what a silversmith is gonna do. He's gonna make a mounting for that particular piece of jewelry. Now it's quite all right with me if you want to draw a picture and send along with your stone. Some people do. But many of them, and I've been in the business now for s-, little better than twenty years, and I've grown somewhat of a reputation, in that length of time, so many of them just
80 send it along and say, "Make me a ring," or, "Make me a pin, or a necklace or a belt buckle," or some such thing. And that's really what the silversmith or the goldsmith does. Of course there's a considerable difference in the cost of the two finished products, in that the cost of gold is about five to six times the cost of silver. Now, do you want me to carry on from there now, as to the—

85 FIELDWORKER: Uhm, stop just a second here. Uh, Mr. [beep], would you give me a sketch of the history of the Yuma area?

INFORMANT: Well, we'd have to go back to fifteen forty, which makes us quite an old community. When you think of the East Coast, you think of John Smith and sixteen twenty. But we out here in the West think of the Spaniard with the name of Alarcon who came here in
90 fifteen forty and stood on the banks of the Colorado River and looked across the tribe of Indians, which finally became known as the Q-U-E-C-H-A-N, and you can pronounce it many ways, but if you pronounce it Spanish, which was the original pronunciation, you'd call it "Quechan." Now, these, these Indians were living here, and were at that time a big tribe, and a very powerful tribe. Now the, the Yuma Indians, as people will call the Quechans today, were a
95 big people. They weren't little, they were six-foot or six-foot-six, six-foot-seven, stuff like this, uh, they weren't small at all, and they were a fierce tribe. And they ruled the river. They, they ruled it from the mouth of the river down here at the Gulf of Baja California, all the way up to the Grand Canyon, and even controlled the tribe that now lives in the bottom of the Grand Canyon called the Havasupai Indians. So, this particular tribe here at Yuma was powerful. And
100 they weren't well-liked by anybody, they were warlike and they were hard to deal with because of the power and they'd had this power for many years. But, uh, Yuma was an all year round place you could cross the river. Now if you'll get out a map and look at the Colorado River, you'll find that the meanders down between the mountains, with the head waters beginning in

105 Montana and Wyoming, and it wanders down through the, the Rocky Mountainous areas here, and it was a big river in its hay day. It was fierce, it was deep, it was difficult to cross, but when it got down here to Yuma, it spread out, it became about three to four miles wide, and it could be forded, or crossed, on an all-year-round basis. And as the Spaniards began to develop this country, they needed an all-year-round basis, or an all-year-round place they could cross this river, so it necessitated establishing something here at Yuma. And the first actual colony was
110 established here in seventeen, uh, seventy-eight, I believe it was. Course the United States was two years old at that time. But this colony was massacred by the Indians in seventeen eighty-one, but there was always a constant effort to gain control and after the massacre of the Spanish colony here, which constituted about three hundred people, uh, the Spaniards sent up an expedition that, should we say, to punish the Yuma Indians, which, uh, meant that, uh, quite
115 a number of them were killed in combat. But the thing that the Spaniards did, that signed the death warrant of this tribe as a powerful tribe, they got people like the Maricopas and the Pimas and the Papagos and the Apaches, and so on, they got them together, and persuaded them that if they would quit fighting among themselves and join together and come here, that they could defeat, uh, the Indians at the Yuma crossing, they could defeat them. So, uh, a very
120 intelligent Spaniard by the name of Juan Pedro Fages came here, leading an expedition of, oh some fifty-odd Spaniards, but five or six hundred Indians, banded together in a common cause of defeating their much hated enemy here at Yuma. And they defeated them. And they continued to come in and defeated them, and continued and continued until this tribe was virtually decimated. Because there wasn't any tribe anywhere around that was as badly
125 disliked, as much hated as was this particular tribe here at the Yuma crossing, because they had denied the use of the Colorado River to all these other Indians for so many years that they'd created nothing but enmity among the other tribes. And, uh, as a result of this decimation of the local tribe then, a crossing was established, and, uh, there was a ferry run here for quite a number of years, and in eighteen forty-nine, after the war with Mexico, and the Treaty of
130 Guadalupe Hidalgo, uh, a military post was established just across the river on what we refer to now as Indian Hill, uh, and from that time on, there's been no problems here at Yuma, and there's always been a community here. Now the land we actually sit on came about as a result of necessity to build a railroad, an all-weather railroad across the United States, so that meant building one on the southern route. And to build it on the southern route, you had to be south
135 of the Gila River. And to build on the south side of the Gila River, we had to have some extra land, so this particular land came into the United States under the Gadsden Purchase in eighteen fifty-three, I believe it was. And, uh, since that time, the Yuma district has been in the United States. Up until that time this was Mexico. We purchased this from Mexico. And by the way, uh, while on the subject, we could have had considerable more. We could have owned the
140 head waters of the Golf of Baja, California down there, which would have been a, a tremendous thing, but the old Eastern senators who controlled the establishment at that time couldn't see purchasing anymore of the cactus and rocks and sand than was absolutely necessary. So, this Gadsden Purchase was that. The railroad didn't complete its crossing in the southern route until eighteen seventy-five, I think. Uh, the railroad hit Yuma from the West Coast in about eighteen

145 seventy. But it met up somewhere in Texas in about eighteen seventy-five and we had, with the
builders from the East Coast. And then we had a southern east-west all-year railroad that was
never snowed in like the rail roads to the north were. Now, the town began as a supply center
for the mining interests in this area. And the history of the mines here begin with the
diminishing of the gold rush, as the gold rush began to play out, those who had not made their
150 fortune already, began to move away from the California area and seek gold in other areas, and
it was found here. And we had several important gold mines here, such as the King of Arizona
and the North Star, and the, uh, the, the Fortuna Mountain, the Fortuna mine down here in the
Gila Mountains. And, uh, these mines were, were rich mines and considerable communities
grew up around them. For instance a community of, say, fifteen hundred was established
155 around the, uh, Fortuna mine and it was not one of the biggest mines. There were supplies
necessary to go into these communities, and Yuma was the center of that supply. Because
supplies could come up on the, uh, riverboats that came up the river in those days, this was
before any dams were put on the river. And river boats did ply the river, it was navigable. So
that began the community. Now as your, uh, mines played out, and this, these mines, none of
160 them were deep, about fifteen hundred feet was as deep as any of them ever went, and the ore
got too poor to continue, so they quit. Something was needed to be done here, and there was
adequate water, [cuckoo clock] there was good land, all they needed was irrigation, they
needed to construct irrigation projects, and one of Yuma's foremost citizens was one Spaniard,
or Mexican, or whatever you want to call it, who came in here right at the close of the gold
165 rush, by the name of Juan Pedro Fages, now, oh, beg your pardon, Jose Maria Redondo, Juan
Pedro Fages was the leader of the expedition to, to punish the Quechan Indians for their
rebellion. Jose Maria Redondo, and Redondo's descendants are here in this community now.
Almost all of the Redondos are from that man. And he established the first irrigation project
along this river, and it was an immense project, he was a man of considerable substance, great
170 foresight and so on. He assisted in building the first church here, he brought things like an organ
and piano around the horn to be in the church, and, uh, this type of thing. He was a man of
great quality, and the community would do well to honor him. But as this irrigation took hold, it
was pretty evident that without some federal assistance, tremendous irrigation projects
couldn't be carried out, because they began to move into the multi-million dollar class. And, uh,
175 so you see, the Bureau of Reclamation was established in Washington, and many of the local
citizens of that era were responsible for the establishment of this Bureau of Reclamation. The
very first Bureau project was right here on this river at the Yuma area, and from that time on,
we became an agricultural community, and it's the basis of our, uh, economy today. For
instance, cotton, we have almost a twenty million-dollar cotton crop here, annually. All the gold
180 that was ever dug out of this community only amounted to seventeen million dollars, in all the
history. So you can see what agriculture means to Yuma. That more or less sums us up.

FIELDWORKER: OK, uh, could I have you now read the story of Arthur the Rat?

INFORMANT: Arthur the Rat. Once upon a time there was a young rat who couldn't make up his
mind. Whenever the other rats asked him if he would like to come out hunting with them, he

185 would answer in a hoarse voice, "I don't know." And when they said, "Would you rather stay
inside?" he wouldn't say yes, or no either. He'd always shrink, no shirk, making a choice. One
fine day his aunt Josephine said to him, "Now look here! No one will ever care for you if you
carry on like this. You have no more mind of your own than a greasy old blade of grass!" The
young rat coughed and looked wise, as usual, but said nothing. "Don't you think so?" said his
190 aunt, stamping with her foot, for she couldn't bear to see the young rat so cold-blooded. "I
don't know," was all he would ever, all he ever answered, and then he'd walk off to think for an
hour or more, whether he should stay in his hole in the ground or go out into the loft. One night
the rats heard a loud noise in the loft. It was a very dreary old place. The roof let the rain come
washing in, the beams and rafters had all rotted through, so that the whole thing was quite
195 unsafe. At last one of the joists gave way, and the beams fell with one edge on the floor. The
walls shook, the cupola fell off, and all the rats' hair stood on end with fear and horror. "This
won't do," said their leader. "We can't stay cooped up here any longer." So they sent out scouts
to search for a new home. A little later on that evening the scouts came back and said that they
had found an old-fashioned horse-barn where there would be room and board for all of them.
200 The leader gave the order at once, "Company fall in!" and the rats crawled out of their holes
right away and stood on the floor in a long line. Just then the old rat caught sight of young
Arthur — that was the name of the shirker. He wasn't in the line, and he wasn't exactly outside
it—he just stood by it. "Come on, get in line!" growled the old rat coarsely. "Of course you're
coming too?" "I don't know," said Arthur calmly. "Why, the idea of it! You don't think it's safe
205 here anymore, do you?" "I'm not certain," said Arthur undaunted. "The roof may not fall down
yet." "Well," said the old rat, "we can't wait for you to join us." Then he turned to the others
and shouted, "Right about face! March!" and the long line marched out of the barn while the
young rat watched them. "I think I'll go tomorrow," he said to himself, "but then again, perhaps
I won't — it's so nice and snug here. I guess I'll go back to my hole under the log for a while just
210 to make up my mind." But during the night there was a big crash. Down came beams, rafters,
joists — the whole business. Next morning — it was a foggy day — some men came to look
over the damage. It seemed odd to them that the old building was not haunted by rats. But at
last one of them happened to move a board, and he caught sight of a young rat, quite dead,
half and half out of his hole. Thus the shirker got his due, and there was no mourning for him.

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